

capabilities to withstand the heat of a steam sterilization cycle, and which is inert to chemical sterilants, and sufficiently nonabsorbent to chemical sterilants, such as hydrogen peroxide and ethylene oxide, so as to not interfere with the sterilization process. The style, arrangement and number of the apertures 30 and projections 32 can be varied by those of skill in the art.

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) A sterilization container system comprising:
an enclosure defining an interior volume;
an upwardly facing surface in the interior volume;
a flexible elastomeric mat having a downwardly facing surface resting upon the upwardly facing surface; and
wherein the downwardly facing surface is provided with a pattern of ridges and wherein the pattern is such that no fold line can traverse the mat from one side to the other without intersecting at least one ridge.

2. (original) A sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the pattern is such that no fold line can traverse the mat from one side to the other without intersecting a plurality of the ridges.

3. (original) A sterilization container system wherein the ridges have a height of 0.5 mm to 10.0 mm.
4. (original) A sterilization container system according to claim 3 wherein the ridges have a height of 0.75 mm to 5.0 mm.
5. (original) A sterilization container system according to claim 4 wherein the ridges have a height of 1.0 mm to 4.0 mm.
6. (original) A sterilization container according to claim 1 wherein the flexible elastomeric mat is formed of silicone.
7. (currently amended) A sterilization container according to claim 6 wherein the silicone has a hardness of equal or less than 90A on the Shore A Scale.
8. (original) A sterilization container according to claim 6 wherein the pattern extends substantially across a dimension of the lower surface.
9. (original) A sterilization container according to claim 1 wherein the mat further comprises a plurality of upwardly projecting members.
10. (original) A sterilization container according to claim 1 wherein the mat further comprises a plurality of apertures therethrough.
11. (original) A sterilization container according to claim 1 wherein the pattern is continuous.

12. (original) A sterilization container according to claim 1 wherein the pattern is discontinuous.

13. (original) A sterilization container according to claim 1 wherein the pattern comprises concentric shapes.

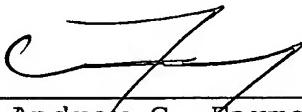
14. (original) A method of sterilizing an item comprises the steps of:

placing a flexible, elastomeric mat into an enclosure having an interior volume;

placing the item onto the mat; and

levitating the mat above a bottom surface of the enclosure via a pattern of ridges on a lower surface of the mat, the pattern being such that no fold line can traverse the mat from one side to the other without intersecting at least one ridge.

Respectfully submitted,



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